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src="http://www.mondo-video.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/03/features_gwar_hea dshot.jpg" alt="" width="257" height="257" />Unmasking Oderus: Lead singer of the greatest band in the universe, GWAR</h1>

Interview
Conducted By: Mondo Justin

 Mondo Film & amp; Video Guide
Editor

I first encountered
GWAR as a young teenager on MTV while watching an episode of the landmark Alex
Winter / Tom Stern MTV show THE IDIOT BOX. I knew from that instant that I had to
find out everything I could about GWAR and their music.

It wasn't long after my first experience with the band that I promptly went out and purchased SCUMDOGS OF THE UNIVERSE followed by AMERICA MUST BE DESTROYED as well as their ambitious long form music videos PHALLUS IN WONDERLAND and SKULHEDFACE on VHS. GWAR was right up my alley, and not because I was a crazy heavy metal fan, cause I wasn't. My favorite music to this day remains that of The Beach Boys. I was into art, cult movies, production in rock 'n roll, comedy, controversy and shock value aesthetics.. I was only fifteen years old, but the music and art of GWAR changed my life forever. I've followed GWAR ever since seeing them almost a dozen times live in concert as well as timely purchasing the latest and greatest album by them as each year passes.

For me, GWAR is high art. It's a strange and perverted combination of professional wrestling, Shakespearean comedy, bad GODZILLA movies, and social satire. Critics have looked down on them. Parental groups have shaken their fingers at them and whispered shame. Ultimately, GWAR is the greatest joke ever played on popular culture elitists. If you don't understand what GWAR is doing, you're not getting the joke. And if you're not getting the joke...you're what's wrong with this country.

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Over the years as

I've encountered some of the younger generation who have yet or are about to experience GWAR live in concert, my advice has always been...Never wear a piece of clothing that you want to ever wear again in your life. You'll leave a GWAR show, stained in red food coloring blood, your shoes checked at the door as they remain suck - cemented into the venue's floor, a social message lightly ingrained in your consciousness, a sore throat from laughing overly hard, and your heart, mind and ear drums blown into sonic oblivion. Forget KISS, MARILYN MANSON, or SLIPKNOT, it's all about GWAR. Gene Simmons may breath fire, but Oderus Urungus slays a giant fifteen foot tall GOR GOR dinosaur that breaths fire out over the crowd while you're kissing your eye brows sayonara. There is NOTHING like a GWAR show, and it's been justly noted as an homage to paganism.

<a</pre> href="http://www.mondo-video.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/03/cdcover.jpg">Over the years, GWAR has released a string of truly fun and interesting albums. From their early effort HELL-O, to their golden age of truly epic and mammoth experimentation SCUMDOGS OF THE UNIVERSE, AMERICA MUST BE DESTROYED, RAGNAROK and finally CARNIVAL OF CHAOS. Which the latter, many should consider their PET SOUNDS album. It's banjo's and experimental sonic progressions mixed with jazz that's deeply infused with heavy metal. Over the last few years the band has released a brilliant distortion of deeper and heavier metal/hard edged punk albums that stick out like sore and infected thumbs in the genre. Albums like THE BLOODY PIT OF HORROR, LUST IN SPACE and BEYOND HELL attack loudly, and have become fan favorites quickly. In addition, members of GWAR have released successful side projects like X-COPS and THE DAVE BROCKIE EXPERIENCE.

As consistently as the band has released music on CD, they've also put out a massive amount of home videos and DVDs over the years starting in the late '80s. In 1992 with PHALLUS IN WONDERLAND, the band chronicled their true life adventures within the legal system over an incident involving an arrest and a prosthetic penis. The full length music video/experimental film is utterly ambitious and genius, and was nominated for a Grammy Award in 1993. Following up PHALLUS the band released an even more aggressive project onto home video called SKULHEDFACE. This long form music video/experimental Sci-fi horror musical received huge gratis and almost made it into theaters, but was rejected as the M.P.A.A. issued it a very killing - NC-17 rating.

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The dramatic and fearless lead of the SCUMDOGS has always fell into the hands of, Mr. David Brockie. Mr. Oderus Urungus. Brockie as an art school whore teamed up with others in school via Richmond Virginia around 1984 to assemble the first incarnation of what would become GWAR. For me, Brockie has always been the most interesting aspect of the GWAR mythos given his background, artistic output, quick witted aptitude for comedy and shock value, social opinions and an total all out cultural surrealism. Like others of the times - Andy Warhol, David Bowie, perhaps [sadly] Lady Gaga, Brockie will go down in history as a true pop culture artist, a contributor that has offered up an alternate perspective on everything going on around each and every one of us, but from a very twisted set of eye-balls. Some may look at all of this GWAR culture as JUST music, but I can't help but see it for what it really is - true and raw art.

Interviewing Brockie proved to be a instant challenge. For a week we were struggling with telephone technology, and the interview almost didn't happen. Finally we got it right, and I spoke with Dave from his home in Virginia as he was in the middle of cooking dinner for his kids, doing the dishes, as well as trying to squeeze in some serious X-Box Live play all while on break prior to heading out on an upcoming leg of GWAR'S THE BLOODY PIT OF HORROR TOUR. Here's how it went...

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src="http://www.mondo-video.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/03/gwar_logo300x139.jpg" alt="" width="191" height="103" />MONDO: You were born in
Canada, how the hell did you end up getting to Virginia?

BROCKIE: Well...you know I didn't have anything to do with it. I was just a kid. At the time I was like 4 years old when my parents moved us from Canada to the suburbs of Washington D.C. I consider myself actually a 100% American even though my passport says I'm Canadian. I've always considered myself to be a American suburban brat.

MONDO: What were like as a kid? What did
you think you wanted to be when you grew up?

BROCKIE: I always knew that I wanted to be some sort of artist. I think the first thing I realized or thought that I wanted to be was, a cartoonist. Really I'd say that I was torn between being a cartoonist and being a marine biologist, cause I loved the movie JAWS. I was really obsessed with sharks. As a freak kid I had every single name of every species of sharks memorized even the Latin names. But when it came down to it, I really hated the biology and the math, I knew that I wasn't gonna be able to handle that stuff, and I decided long ago that whatever I did I knew it was something I had to enjoy doing.

So, by the time I got to art school I tried to take that cartoon sensibility through the fine art program. But my teachers weren't having that, they didn't wanna see me drawing a bunch of cartoon's plus they were all very traditionalists. At first I sort of rebelled, but then it became good, cause I was trained and had that fine art tradition drummed into my head, and that's a beautiful thing. I really thought I'd end up being a painter, showing in galleries or whatever, I thought I had the chops to do that, but I just messed around with it.

I had always played in bands for fun over the years, so in college I met this group of guys, and the whole idea of GWAR just came up, and here it's over 25 years later and I'm still doing it. In many ways, I'm still the same kid I was 25 years ago, and I still enjoy doing the same things I did back then.

MONDO: Do you think there were any early inclinations that you'd be doing what you're doing now? Meaning, were you a natural performer as a kid?

BROCKIE: Well I was always playing in bands growing up, but I was also doing stuff in the theater department in school as well. It was just a bunch of regular guys just hanging around. I was just doing all of it for fun, and it seems like it was something that just sorta came natural to me, and I enjoyed doing that stuff the most. So it wasn't until we came up with the idea of GWAR that I realized it was something that we could do for a living.

MONDO: Can you remember the actual
instance when you first came up with the Oderus character?

BROCKIE: The funny thing about Oderus was that I didn't even come up with his name. I came up with a

bunch of the other character's names in GWAR, but the Oderus name came from a guy named Joe Annaruma who was one of the first lead singers in an early version of GWAR who played the character - Joey Slutman. Cause initially I was just playing guitar in GWAR, but when everyone realized what a horrible guitar player I was, I just graduated into the lead singer position, and things seemed to merge and mutate into the right places, cause before that we where going through lead singers, cause we couldn't find the right fit.

The Oderus character originally started out as something different. He was kinda just this hairy barbarian guitar guy. Once Oderus graduated into the singer, the first thing he got was the big puss sack head, then I added the Satan nose, and the horns, and that's when the Oderus that we all know and love came to be, and I honed the personality from there over the years.

MONDO: I was wondering if you've ever seen the 1957 film directed by Jacques Tourneur called, CURSE OF THE DEMON. I was wondering if the look and design of Oderus was inspired by the creature in that film.

BROCKIE: Yes it was.
I've loved that movie since I was a kid. You get that awesome close-up of the
demon at the end. The demon looks like Satan, and I wanted to make Oderus look
like Satan, I wanted people to be reminded of Satan for sure with
Oderus.

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MONDO: So besides CURSE OF THE DEMON, have any other films influenced you in terms of what you do in GWAR?

BROCKIE: I was really freaked out by the movie BLACK SABBATH, in particular the part called, 'A Drop Of Water.' I remember seeing this at around four years old, and just being completed scared by it. It really scared the crap out of me and I was unable to watch television by myself for a few years after that. Then for sure, NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD. GODZILLA, CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON, DRACULA I saw all those classics growing up too.

Then in high school,
I saw DAWN OF THE DEAD. We saw it like 20 times in the theater. You were

supposed to be over 18 to see it, and we weren't. So we went and bought a bunch of college logo shirts. We wanted it to look like we were in college, so we put them on so we could get in. It was a different time in America then, the era of the midnight movie was wonderful.

Also, another film that influenced me that I saw by accident was WIZARDS. The Ralph Bakshi film. In fact, I love all of his movies. Then, Charlton Heston in THE OMEGA MAN too. That had a huge impact on me growing up. THE EXORCIST as well. Plus John Carpenter's THE THING. It's just such a sick movie, my absolute favorite movie. I'm old enough to have been able to see all these movies in the theater so that was cool, but on that same note, it really sucks that I'm getting older...laughing

MONDO: You're a big Sam Peckinpah fan yourself right? Any favorites?

BROCKIE: Oh yeah..
Peckinpah is my favorite. He's the father of modern cinematic screen violence. I love all his stuff. I like CROSS OF IRON. It is the greatest war movie ever made. It came out right when Vietnam was just killing us, so the last thing American's wanted to do was see a war movie, and one about Germans in Russia no less. So Peckinpah had big balls.

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MONDO: One thing I've always loved about
you and GWAR is that you're never afraid of offending anyone, as you get older, is
this philosophy stronger than ever?

BROCKIE: Totally,
stronger than ever. As people get older you notice just how strong they are in their
convictions. As you get older you're convinced more and more that you're right.
I'm not about to back down at this point. I think it's why people like what we
do.

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src="http://www.mondo-video.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/03/Phallus.jpg" alt="" width="131" height="186" />MONDO: I'd like to talk about the PHALLUS IN WONDERLAND and SKULHEDFACE films. I know PHALLUS was a concept based on true events of sorts, but how did you come up with the whole concept for

SKULHEDFACE?

BROCKIE:
SKULHEDFACE was the result of the entire band and the art department just arguing and arguing for months on what we wanted to achieve. I'm still not sure exactly what we came up with. SKULHEDFACE is a beautiful look at film in a lot of ways, but it murders itself. If you can get
/span style="color: #000000;">past the boardroom scene you might actually enjoy it.

By that point, we
were just so diluted with our own grandeur that we couldn't care less what anyone
had to say, and we weren't gonna let anyone tell us what to do, including each
other. We thought that everything we did was just perfect. We thought we were
king shit of diarrhea mountain.

I just remember having script meeting after script meeting after script meeting. So I think everyone was just so wore down that everyone just agreed to do whatever. I remember reading that boardroom scene and just thinking how horrible it was. But I just kept my mouth shut just so we could get the damn thing made. We came up with the idea that everyone in the band would write a scene. This was a very bad idea, I can't believe we thought it was a good idea at the time even...laughing

The film is what it is. It's sort of our masterpiece. It killed some of the weak band members and it sent us in a spiral of confusion for the better part of a decade. I don't think we really knew what we were doing after it, except when we were playing live. But I don't think we came outta of it until we hit the VIOLENCE HAS ARRIVED era that we came out of that ego. We thought we were everything, we were making comic books, and movies, we had at one time 20 artists working for us. It really was the golden age of GWAR, a great time, and it's my favorite era of the band.

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MONDO: I agree, and both PHALLUS AND WONDERLAND and SKULHEDFACE were just so damn ambitious don't you think?

BROCKIE: Oh god
yeah....We shot SKULHEDFACE on 35mm film. What other band made a movie on
35mm film? We're still doing skits like that.. We took it to a completely different
level. If you think back to when SKULHEDFACE came out there was no internet even.
It's just so strange that it reached the amount of people it did.

MONDO: I love the television commercials
in SKULHEDFACE especially 'Lawn Jockeys', is that sort of like the first incarnation for
the X-COPS?

BROCKIE: laughing....yeah absolutely...that was a
good one. While we were on the set in those cop costumes we looked at each
other, and said "We should start a band and play in these costumes cause this is
hilarious." So the X-COPS were born there.

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MONDO: Going in reverse for a second, how
did Gibby Haynes from THE BUTTHOLE SURFERS come to be in PHALLUS IN
WONDERLAND with you guys?

BROCKIE: We knew Gibby [Haynes] cause we had played down in Austin, Texas quite a few times. They invited us out to their ranch in Driftwood and ended up partying with them, so they were our buddies. So when we were doing PHALLUS we just invited him up to do it. He said he would do it for a case of Milwaukee's Best and some pornography. So that's what he was paid. He caused SO much trouble when he was here... He took one look at the script, and then decided to make up his own lines...laughing.

MONDO: So Gibby came up with the whole
"sucking off the family dog" line?

BROCKIE: Yeah...
{Gibby accent] then perhaps sucking off the family dog...laughing

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MONDO: Any bitterness remaining toward
Annie Lennox all these years later for stealing your Grammy for PHALLUS IN
WONDERLAND?

BROCKIE: Oh
yeah...Bitch. And to everyone else that's ever screwed us out of an
award.

MONDO: One of my all time favorite GWAR
appearances in the history of the band, was when you did "Sacrifice Your Daughter
To GWAR" with Alex Winter on MTV'S THE IDIOT BOX How did that whole thing
happen?

BROCKIE Yeah, that
was great! God, that was twenty years ago! Working with Alex was so great. In
fact he made one of my favorite movies of all time, FREAKED. Such an amazing
movie.

They just called us up one day, and asked us I think. Alex was hanging out a lot with THE BUTTHOLE SURFERS, cause he shot that video with them, and of course we knew those guys, so I guess he was introduced to us through THE BUTTHOLES or something. I'll tell you... I'd love to collaborate on anything with Alex Winter again. It was so great.

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MONDO: I'm a huge fan of CARNIVAL OF CHAOS. It's your PET SOUNDS. Reading stuff on-line I've noticed that people [GWAR fans] seem to have some distaste toward the album, I was wondering if it was an album that you guys didn't like either?

BROCKIE:
No..No..No..No.. I think it's a great album. I love that album. We did so much on
that record, that's so cool. It's called CARNIVAL OF CHAOS cause it's all over the
place. I think it's a brilliant record, and I know it's got a very special place in the
heart of a lot of GWAR fans.

MONDO: One of my favorite songs on the
album is 'Scalloped Boat'. I know that was based on an actual fan
letter you got right?

BROCKIE: Yeah..we
actually got a fan letter from this guy in jail who killed his wife. All the lyrics in the
song where inspired from the letter. I still have that letter
somewhere.

MONDO: One of my favorite GWAR songs of
course is 'The Road Behind'. With that appearing on BEAVIS AND
BUTTHEAD back in the day, do you think that helped get the band more notice than
you previously had.

BROCKIE: I think
when we wrote that song, it was intended to be a sort of parody hit like stuff that
Weird Al was doing. We really thought we were lampooning stuff that GUNS N
ROSES were doing at the time. We kinda hoped that the song would have even
reached out farther than it did. But it's a great song.

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MONDO: With a song like that, given what
you had written previously -- is that song just a progression perhaps of an artist
maturing some?

BROCKIE: Definitely. We were still growing a lot as musicians by the time we got to AMERICA MUST BE DESTROYED. We were having a lot of fun doing stuff like that, writing all kinds of different music. We followed that pattern probably up until CARNIVAL OF CHAOS. Then with something like WE KILL EVERYTHING we took a new direction and made that a straight out comedy album really. And now we've had our re-birth as a pure metal band which we've been doing for the last few albums, so the progression is always moving us forward.

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src="http://www.mondo-video.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/03/GWAR1-296x300.jpg" alt="" width="157" height="178" />MONDO: Moving on, I wanted to talk about your totally bad ass cover of ALICE COOPER'S 'Schools Out' which I love, and the video is great too. Why the decision to do a cover finally after over 25 years of recording?

BROCKIE: To be completely honest, we had been kicking around the idea of doing a cover for many years, but just never managed to get to it. At the point we did that cover, we had just signed with DTR Records, and they were the one's that actually brought it up.

Originally I didn't
wanna do 'School's Out', I wanted to LED ZEPPELIN'S 'Immigrant Song'
but they said "nobody ever covers Zeppelin in the industry - it's taboo." So, then
we kicked around doing 'If You Want Blood' by AC/DC. We were gonna
resurrect Bon Scott from the dead, and that never materialized either.

So 'School's
Out' came up, and DTR Records was pushing us on that song. So we said,
"well maybe this label knows something that we don't." They didn't...laughing You
know they said they were gonna get Alice Cooper for the video, but at the last
minute he decided he didn't wanna do it. Whatever, it's all good. It still turned out
great. It's a fun video. Dave the guy who directed it, is one of my favorite directors,
and he did a great job with it.

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MONDO: I've seen a couple interviews with
you online where you mention that you're working on a spoken word album that
you're gonna call THE SPOKEN TURD. I was wondering if you're still working on it?

BROCKIE: That's a great title isn't it? Yeah, I'm working on it. I don't think I'm gonna have the record label release it. I think it's just gonna be something that's available like on CD Baby or something on the internet.. It's gonna be something like DBX [Dave Brockie Experience] but a comedy spoken word album, or something with songs that are more story oriented. I've got some crazy ideas about what I wanna do on it.. You can look for it soon.

MONDO: I've seen you mention in the past,
that your a fan of bands like SLAYER and BAD BRAINS. But I was wondering if
you've got a secret love of other genre's of music? Are you a closet fan of Hank
Williams or something?

BROCKIE: Well, I
love pop music. I'm a big U2 fan. A lot of the GWAR fans will probably freak out
when they hear that. My first album that I ever bought when I was like four years
old was a single by Barry Manilow. I was just a kid, and I didn't know any

better...laughing The first actual real album I bought though was WELCOME TO MY NIGHTMARE by Alice Cooper. So you see, I figured it out...laughing

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MONDO: So in GWAR does the music
always come first, or can some of the stage theatrics get a priority over everything
else?

BROCKIE: Well, that's how it really started initially. At first, the theatrics took center stage. That was the whole concept, then when we all realized we could make money at this, we decided that we had better write some good music since the fans actually gave a shit about the band, and plus - the fans started to expect more from us too.

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src="http://www.mondo-video.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/03/Gwar-300x219.png" alt="" width="300" height="256" />MONDO: Now in your 25th year of GWAR, are you starting to see a mix of the ages at your live shows when you go out on tour?

BROCKIE: Oh hell yeah dude.. I've seen generations show up at a GWAR show. You wouldn't believe it. I've seen a grandmother, her daughter, and then their daughter or son there. All covered in GWAR blood in the slam pit. You've got grannies like 55 years old there covered in blood. There aren't a lot of grannies showing up but I have seen them at various shows in recent years. GWAR is something that families rally around and that is truly disturbing to me...laughing

MONDO: Well there is certainly a family
dynamic present there in the audience and on the stage, wouldn't you
agree?

BROCKIE: Yeah,
totally. GWAR is just one big family.

MONDO: I'm quite fascinated with your complete transformation in the regard that when you put on that Oderus mask, you become a completely different person, than the person that I am talking to right now. Do you look at yourself as an actor? What are some of your comedy

influences?

BROCKIE: Well, it goes back to high school. I did theater in high school as I said earlier. But I grew up idolizing people like Laurel and Hardy, and The Marx Brothers. I didn't really like some of the more contemporary comedians growing up. But as I got older I started to really appreciate someone like Bobcat Goldthwait for example.

MONTY PYTHON was
also a huge influence on me. But that's what GWAR is all about for me. I get to take
all this stuff that I've been influenced by and utilize it and do something that I
love.

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MONDO: One thing I've always loved about
Oderus is the fact that he's so dramatic. Is he a frustrated Shakespearean actor on
one level?

BROCKIE:
laughing...Yeah he's always thinking that there's some sort of grandiose destiny out
there waiting for him, but at the end of the day he's really just a drug addict and a
drunkard. But he does have a noble soul definitely, and he's quite the
blow-hard.

MONDO:
Some of the stuff I've seen you say while in the Oderus character like on FOX NEW'S
RED EYE is just insane. I have to ask you how difficult it is for you to not break that
character and laugh out load in the middle of some of that stuff you're doing and
saying?

BROCKIE: Anytime
I'm in the suit I'm not gonna break that character. I can kinda flirt around the edges
of it, but you have to be very sure of what you're doing. You can't back down an
inch, cause you'll lose people immediately. You can't wear a costume like that in a
half ass manner.

I think I'm kinda laughing to myself most of the time. It's totally thinking on your feet. It's not that hard for me to do. If someone were to ask me to perform brain surgery I wouldn't be very good at it, cause I'm horrible at algebra. But what I think I am good at is singing and dancing, acting like a complete idiot, thinking on my feet and improvisational acting. I mean what the hell I've made an entire career outta it.

But I still don't have a retirement plan but I still have a lot of life in me. There is no 401K plan in GWAR. The only security in doing this is that people still want to see us do GWAR. It makes no sense, but it's my fate.

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MONDO: Are you still doing the commercial
and commissioned artwork?

BROCKIE: Sure, the business is doing great. I'm still pursuing the stuff I learned in school. Graphic art stuff. People are asking me to do little collectible pieces for them. My friend just tapped me to design the label for his new hot sauce line. So I'm keeping busy on a lot of different levels. I just put out a book a while back called WAR GHOUL. But GWAR is the main focus.

MONDO: So what's the chance of me
purchasing from you a replica Oderus Urungus mask?

BROCKIE:
laughing...I have sold some actually. They are 600 bucks. I charge 300 up front,
and then 300 on delivery. And it will take me like 8 months to do them, cause I'm so
damn busy. I have to charge so much cause people want them, and if I didn't
charge so much I wouldn't be able to keep up with the demand of it.

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src="http://www.mondo-video.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/03/Gwar.jpg" alt="" width="292" height="337" />MONDO: So if you weren't doing GWAR what would Dave Brockie have chosen as his career?

BROCKIE: Shit...I don't know man... Maybe politics, I've always been good at talking people into doing things especially if they don't wanna do it. Maybe stand up, I don't know. Prior to GWAR I was a construction worker for years. It was how I paid my bills before GWAR. But I would've hated doing that for the rest of my life. There's

certainly nothing wrong with being a construction worker, as you get to put in an honest days work out in the clean fresh air, but I just don't think I could have done that for the rest of my life. But what the hell you know, construction workers get all the chicks...laughing

MONDO: What can fans expect to see from GWAR on this current tour?

BROCKIE: Well this leg is just sort of a wrap up of THE BLOODY PIT OF HORROR TOUR. Pick up dates that we missed from last year. Plus there are places that if we don't play them the fans will be pissed. They can expect the same blood and meaningless horror that they've all come to know and love..

MONDO: One last question...Does Oderus
have a best joke?

BROCKIE: OK. A women is having a baby. The doctor walks into her room holding the baby by the leg. He takes the baby by the leg. The women says "what are you doing with my baby?" The doctor takes the baby and bashes the head of the baby against the bed smashing it's head in and it's brains go all over the place. The women screams "MY BABY@!~" The doctor says "April fools it was already dead!"

For more information on GWAR and DAVE BROCKIE please visit their official sites HERE and HERE

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